

The Impact of Multinational Joint Task Force Counter-Operations in the Fight against Boko Haram Insurgency

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Abstract

The Boko Haram insurgency is a security threat to the countries of the Lake Chad Basin Region made up of Chad, Cameroon, Libya, Niger, Nigeria and the Central African Republic. The core and popular ideology of the sect is that “Western education is forbidden”; hence they are commonly referred to in Hausa as Yan Boko Haram. “Boko” in Hausa means western education and “Haram” in Arabic means forbidden. Boko Haram activities have therefore become a collective security threat to the Lake Chad Basin (LCBC) countries including Benin Republic necessitating the need for the countries to constitute themselves into a security community – the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to manage the situation. The collective security theory was adopted for this work because it best explains the activities of the insurgents and the Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin Region. The research adopted the phenomenology research design with the qualitative approach. Data were essentially composed of direct non participant observation and other secondary sources. This research identified poor funding, logistics and mutual suspicion among member states as some of the impediments militating against the success of the joint actions against the insurgents. This study therefore suggests that more funds be dedicated to the operations of the MNJTF, while countries of the region do more to address underlining social problems through good governance, they must also askew the age long colonial legacies of mutual suspicion and collaborate more closely in dealing with the mutual threats at hand.

Keywords: Boko Haram Insurgency, Chad Basin, Collective Security, Counter-Insurgency, Lake Chad, Multinational Joint Task Force.

Introduction

The *Boko Haram* insurgency is a security threat to the countries of the Lake Chad Basin Region Chad, Cameroon, Libya, Niger, Nigeria the Central African Republic (CAR). *Boko Haram* was not the name chosen to be known with by the group, but was given to it based on the views of its basic believes. Officially, the group is known as *Jama’atul Ahalul Sunna Waljama’a Lidda a’ wati Wal Jihadi* (the group of the people of the Sunnah for preaching and Jihad). Its core and popular ideology is that Western education is a forbidden; hence they are

commonly referred to in Hausa as *yan boko haram*. “Boko” in Hausa language simply means western education and “Haram” in Arabic means forbidden.

The group and its activities have therefore become a collective security threat to the Lake Chad Basin (LCBC) countries including Benin Republic necessitating the need for the countries, to constitute themselves into a security community – the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to manage the situation. This security procedure departs from the existing normative framework for conflict intervention in Africa, which places the responsibility for managing such a problem on the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS. From the beginning when the insurgency started it was a Nigerian problem but it later became a regional problem through poor management by Nigeria and the indifference of its neighbours. This provided the circumstances under which the MNJTF had to be formed.

The *Boko Haram* sect was founded by an Islamic cleric known as Mohammed Yusuf whose father died as a committed member of the Maitatsine sect (Kane, 2003) responsible for the death of thousands of Nigerians in parts of northern Nigeria in the 1980s, including in the northeast which is now the epicenter of the Boko Haram crisis. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report of 2015 indicates that *Boko Haram* has overtaken the Islamic State (ISIS) as the World’s deadliest terror group. Beyond casualties, *Boko Haram* attacks and associated fighting between the members of the group and security forces have exacted a heavy toll on the Lake Chad Basin region where Niger Republic in particular had to contend with influx of Nigerian refugees (Blanchard, 2016). This ugly situation is worrisome not just to Nigeria, but particularly to the entire West African sub-region.

Boko Haram now poses serious security threat to West Africa, though the region has been plagued with serious security crises since the end of the cold war in 1991, the possibility that the threat of *Boko Haram* spreading its tentacles to neighboring countries and beyond poses a great challenge to stability and peace in the region (Aduloju et al, 2014) the reason being that the region shared economic conditions such as poverty, unemployment and lack of social security that compounded and compromised security in the sub-region. People who came to join the *Boko Haram* movement included rural and urban peasants retrenched from their farming, fishing and other agricultural vocations by the drying up of Lake Chad. These conditions enable *Boko Haram* to recruit from other states and

further spread across the sub-region (Dan Suleiman, 2015) as already witnessed in Cameroon, Niger and Chad Republics.

The Lake was the sixth largest Lake in the world with a hydrographic basin area of 2,381,631 square kilometers and an active basin of 966,955 square kilometers. It provides fresh water and agricultural resources such as fisheries and pasture to a huge population in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Central African Republic, Libya, Sudan and even Algeria. It is today under serious threat of desiccation occasioned by climate change. Its water body reduced from 25,000 square kilometres in 1963 to 2,000 square kilometres in 2010 creating problems of unemployment, water scarcity, environmental pollution, and threats to biodiversity survival, amongst several other livelihood issues (Olawale, 2017). This has compounded the national security problems in the affected states and accentuated regional security of West and Central Africa Ifabiyi (2013, p. 196). The ungoverned remote areas of West Africa especially the border areas and vast empty lands of the Sahel region provides a safe haven for terrorist organizations and efforts to establish links with local terrorist organizations especially *Boko haram* with other terrorist groups is already yielding result with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb, Alshabab in Somalia, and Islamic State (IS). The danger of *Boko haram* in the sub-region is further seen in the possibilities of a breakout of similar terrorist groups in the West African countries that mostly share similar social conditions like what is obtainable in Nigeria with high number of unemployed youths, Muslim-Christian rivalries and poverty as a result of government neglect, Illicit arm trafficking and also the infiltration of international terrorist groups in the region (Aduloju et al, 2014).

Threats of *Boko haram* in the region cannot be under estimated and it should be a serious concern to LCBC because the growing destabilization of peace and security in Nigeria is invariably destroying the peace and security of the entire West Africa. If this is true, then the war against *Boko haram* is not a task reserved for the Nigerian State alone, but the entire international community but particularly, Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS).

In March 2014, defense and military chiefs from the six-member states of Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) comprising of Chad, Cameroon, Libya, Niger, Nigeria and Central African Republic (CAR) met in Cameroon to agree on the need for a joint task force to combat arms trafficking, terrorism and cross-border

attacks as tensions escalate in the region. Cameroon was interested in this particular meeting as the conflict in CAR and the insurgency in northern Nigeria were beginning to have adverse spillover effect on it, pushing refugees, weapons and violence into the country from its neighbours. The meeting agreed that a Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which was already formed in Nigeria and headquartered in Baga, Borno State, would simply be expanding its scope. It was agreed that the initial mandate of the new task force would be to patrol the Lake Chad region, conduct military operations against arms dealers and suspected terrorists and facilitate free movement (Kindzeka, 2014). However, *Boko haram* activities in Nigeria, is the current security challenge of the region because of its high tendency of escalation and spread to other parts of the region. This is so because of the evidence of conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leon, Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, quickly spreading to affect other parts of the region. The group started its violent activities in Nigeria but today it has spread to the republics of Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Many factors such as weak states, porous borders, availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), relatively free movement of persons and goods, youth bulge, and the growing networks of transnational criminals make terrorism a regional concern that requires holistic regional responses (Salihu, 2015).

In West Africa, terror groups today are scrambling for control of local extremist groups all in an effort to expand terrorist activities. Some sophisticated extremist elements that have evolved out of the member states of LCBC have joined forces with foreign groups such as Al-Shabaab, AL Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP), absorbed smaller ones or become an arm of a foreign group to perpetuate violence within the region (ECOWAS, 2015). This is demonstrated by pledging of alliance by *Boko Haram* to ISIS in April 2015 and renaming itself as the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) (BBC, 2015). This further shows that Boko Haram is indeed a regional security threat. The renaming can enhance ISWAP's legitimacy among extremists and facilitate recruitment, while enabling ISIS to showcase its international credentials and, potentially, spread to other African countries particularly West Africa (ECOWAS, 2015).

The *Boko Haram* terrorist group is a big threat to the region because of its effects on the giant of the region – Nigeria. The Government of Niger under President Mahamadou Issoufou alluded to the fact that Nigeria is a leader not only in West Africa, but the whole of Africa and what affects Nigeria affects Africa (Akowe,

2015). This means that Nigeria, because of the *Boko Haram* activities may not be able to play its preponderant role in the region. Onuoha (2014) assessed the security implications of *Boko haram* on four broad levels, namely; the group's resourcing and acquisition including recruitment, training, equipment, and funding; the mounting of cross border attacks; the consequence of its operations; and a potential erosion of Nigeria's role as the leader in the region.

The area controlled by the sect include the large swathes of the roads from Maiduguri to Lake Chad, where Nigeria meets Niger, Chad and Cameroon, a well-known trafficking route. This further the threats to the security of West Africa. Recruitment of members takes place in Niger, Nigeria and other states in West Africa where teenage boys are recruited from existing criminal gangs (Ray, 2016). The criminals do not necessarily belief in the ideology of *Boko haram*, but joined purely for economic benefits after being offered attractive payment.

Statement of the Problem

The campaign against the terror of *Boko Haram* should not be the business of Nigeria alone, but the collective effort from Lake Chad Basin Countries. If the terrorist group, *Boko haram* overruns the Nigerian state, the dire consequences would be felt in the whole of the region as it will be difficult for the ECOWAS to implement its objectives without the active support of Nigeria that is the backbone of the regional organization. Onuoha (2014) corroborated by observing that for the foreseeable future, *Boko haram* will remain a major security threat to the nation and region unless concerted efforts are made by the Nigerian government and both regional as well as international actors to wear away the appeal of *Boko haram* ideology, inhibit its opportunities for recruitment and radicalization and cut off its funding. This calls for concerted efforts by all stake holders in the region – the individual governments of member states, security experts in the region, the academia as well as researchers to join hands in halting the menace of *Boko haram* in the region. This work is an effort directed towards assessing the role of the MNJTF in the region and the war against *Boko Haram*. A lot has been researched and written on *Boko haram* activities in Nigeria but this work would focus on the role of the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against *Boko Haram* in the region.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are;

- To determine the extent to which *Boko haram* threatens the security of the West African region.
- To examine the measures adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in tackling the security threats posed by *Boko haram* in the region.
- To identify the challenges faced by the Multinational Joint Task Force in ending the scourge of *Boko haram* in West Africa.
- To proffer suggestions for additional measures that should be adopted in fighting *Boko Haram* in the region.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in a number of ways. The knowledge gained would help policy makers and scholars and international organizations in formulating policies relevant to the struggle against Boko Haram and improve the effectiveness of the MNJTF in maintaining security of the Lake Chad Basin. It will also open the door for further research in the area of regional security of West Africa. It will contribute to the existing literature and body of knowledge on Multinational Joint Task Force and the struggle against *Boko Haram* in monitoring security in West Africa.

Conceptual Review

Security

Security is associated with many different meanings that refer to the frame works and dimensions that apply to individuals, issue areas, societal conventions and changing historical conditions and circumstances. Therefore "security as an individual or societal political value does not possess an independent meaning and is always related to a context and a specific individual or societal system and its realization" (Brauch, 2008, p.27). This can however be described as stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe) and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance or knowing that one is wanted, accepted, loved, and protected in one's community or neighborhood and by people around. It focuses on emotional and psychological sense of belonging to a social group which can offer one protection (Achumba et al, 2013, p.80).

According to Francis (2005, p.22), "security is a state of being safe and the absence of fear, anxiety, danger, poverty and oppression. It is the preservation of

core values and the absence of threats to these values" (Cited in Alli, 2010, p. 73). Imobighe (1990, p. 224) opines "that security is the freedom from threats to a nation's capability to defend and develop itself, promote its values and lawful interest". For Zabadi (2005, p.3), "security is a state in which people or things are not exposed to danger of physical or moral aggression, accident, theft or decline". This view is associated with the survival of the state and the preservation of its citizens. In other words, the state has the responsibility of the use of force and power for the safety of its territory and its people.

Security in the context of Africa means the protection of individuals with respect to the satisfaction of the basic needs of life; it also encompasses the creation of the social, political, economic, military, environmental and cultural conditions necessary for survival including the protection of fundamental freedom, access to education, healthcare and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his/her own potential (Poku et al, 2007).

Terrorism

Society's rules are constantly changing, constantly being revised and rewritten not only by the formal processes of lawmaking but by the actions of acceptance, compliance, or resistance from the various social forces and coalitions thereof shared meaning comes to the fore, and here is the pivot of society. Wayne (2008, p.14) "depicted terrorism as a violent pushback against the state, society's primary institution, by ascendant and competing social forces". Similarly, terrorism which has become a global phenomenon is a deliberate and systematic use of violence to destroy, kill, maim and intimidate the innocent in order to achieve a goal or draw national/international attention or demands which ordinarily may be impossible or difficult to achieve under normal political negotiation or on the battle field against a government army (Chukwura et al, 2015). They further argued that terrorism whether internationalized or localized is always politically motivated, though it may also show other auxiliary motives to include religion, economic or social reasons. Terrorism most times instills fear in the generality of the populace so as to send a greater message (Chukwura et al, 2015).

Jenkins (2005) explains terrorism as the threat to violence, or a campaign of violence designed primarily to instill fear or terrorize the ordinary citizens. He further argued that terrorism is violence for effect, not only and sometimes not at all for the effect on the actual victims of the terrorists. Terrorism is violence aimed at the people waiting. That at least distinguished terrorist tactics from

mugging and other forms of violent crimes that may terrify but are not terrorism. Isyaku (2013) maintains that terrorism in the developing countries is caused by resource mobilization problems, and suggests that states which are more prosperous and socially integrated but politically weak in institutional framework would tend to develop more terrorist activities on the basis that group competition for power and resources become intense. Terror is extra normal violence, one which goes beyond the formal rules which govern coercion particularly in the explicit refusal to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, guilty and innocents. The target is not the victim but the public as a whole (Mbachu & Yesufu, 2011, p. 211).

Terrorism today is seen as a strategy of resistance to the modern state therefore for the purpose of this research, terrorism can be understood to mean all forms of violent actions by clandestine and semi clandestine actors aimed at achieving criminal, military, religious, political or other objectives with such actions often directed at government and non-combatant population with the deliberate objective of spreading fear, anxiety and terror. Terrorism as a word in its usual usage has a connotation of evil, indiscriminate violence or brutality. Thus, to label a group or action as terrorist is to seek to imply that the actors or the violence is immoral, wrong, or contrary to obvious basic ethical principles that any reasonable human being might hold (James & Brenda, 2008, p.7).

Multi National Joint Force

The MNJTF fighting *Boko Haram* in the borders of Chad Republic, Niger Republic, Nigeria and Cameroon was formed in April 2012. However, this was not the first MNJTF formed between the countries of the Lake Chad. The first MNJTF was formed in 1994 by the administration of Gen. Sani Abacha to secure the north-east region against armed bandits from the Chadian war. The initial responsibility of the Force was to clear the border regions of the activities of the bandits and promote free movement of persons and goods across the borders. In 1998, the Force became truly multinational by incorporating military units from Chad, Niger and Nigeria and the mandate was to deal with common cross-border security problems in the Lake Chad region (Isaac, 2017).

Defense and military chiefs from the six-member Lake Chad Basin Commission (Chad, Cameroon, Libya, Niger, Nigeria and CAR) met in Cameroon to agree on the need for a joint task force to combat arms trafficking, terrorism and cross-border attacks as tensions escalate in the region. In practice, the MNJTF does not

fight all the battles that have to be fought against *Boko Haram*. Its mandate is limited to securing the borders between LCB countries. It ensures that *Boko Haram* does not have access to the use of the borders for launching its attacks. With the borders secured, each of the countries is expected to flush out *Boko Haram* elements from their respective countries.

Counter-Insurgency (COIN)

Counter insurgency is any deliberate action taken by a state against the activities of an insurgent group with the aim of defeating or undermining its progress. According to Osakwe and Ubong (cited in Mohammed, 2020, p.192), “Counter insurgency is a coordinated action of the state towards addressing gaps in the forms of societal problems on which insurgents capitalize”. It also stands for a war waged within a state by government using the instrument of state power in a combination of military, political, economic, civil, legal and psychological means against the idea and activities of an insurgent (Mohammed, 2020, p. 192).

Insurgent groups are usually opportunistic, they often exploit and take advantage of some existing society problems like poverty, ignorance and inadequacies in government to draw support and win membership and they also lure youths and other vulnerable groups with inducement as a means of recruitment of members. The ongoing military operation in the northeast Nigeria as well as the involvement of the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad area is a good example.

Theoretical Framework

Collective Security Theory:

In discussing and analyzing regional security in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) as in the case of MNJTF and regional security in West Africa, it will be most appropriate to use the Theory of Collective Security. The theory of collective security sprouted out of Liberal institutionalism that views the international system as one based on community of states with the potential of cooperating to overcome mutual problems (Goldstein and Pevernhouse, 2011 & Galadima, 2006). Collective security theory is a liberal theory of international relations in that it emphasizes venues of cooperation and mutual obligation. States enter multilateral agreements to refrain from attacking one another and also for economic relations, but within an overarching organization to which they owe allegiance. According to the theory, pledging to an international organization will create a more stable commitment than a large, confusing set of bilateral

treaties (<https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2007/08/06/collective-security-revisiting-a-theory>). Collective security refers to the formation of a broad alliance of most major actors in an international system for the purpose of jointly opposing aggression by an actor (Goldstein and Pevenhouse, 2011). Collective security is also seen as a formal commitment among groups of countries in order to protect the security interest of the individual members within their joint spheres of interest (Aleksovski, et al, 2014). It is also explained to mean an arrangement by which all member states agree, as a collective, to reverse any threat posed by an outsider against any of its member states (Gebresilassie, 2012).

Galadima (2006) identified three models of collective security; the first is the Kantian or Wistonian collective security model that is seen as an arrangement among states for effective actions against any aggressor from within that community of states. The second is the intervention usually undertaken by a coalition of states, against international aggression or internal conflict or disorder with the explicit or implicit approval of the United Nations. The third model is the collective security that concerns an intervention by a single state or a coalition of states against international aggression or internal conflict or disorder without the approval of the United Nations Security council.

Under collective security, states agree to abide by certain norms and rules to maintain stability and, when necessary, bond together to stop aggression (Kupchan & Kupchan, 1995), this stems from the realization that the security threats confronting nations in contemporary times are such that may not be solved by states acting alone, hence the need for synergy of capacity and strategy (Bolaji, 2010). It is believed that stability (of any region) is the product of cooperation (Kupchan & Kupchan, 1995) the essence of collective security is to combat present threats to peace and stability. In a system of collective security, an enemy that is the aggressor, is a threat to regional or international peace and security and would be isolated and would have to face the organized power of the whole international community (Aleksovski et al, 2014, and Andretta, 1996). We can perfectly understand collective security as a security arrangement, of either regional or global in which each state in the system accepts that security of one is the concern of all and agrees to join in a collective response to threats to peace and security.

The United Nations, since inception in 1945 has been an institutional framework for collective security of the countries of the world and has been utilizing its

contingents of multinational force to keep and maintain international peace and security. There are also other regional organizations like North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that are concerned with the collective security of its member states. According to Aleskovski et al (2014, p. 278), "NATO has been a successful example of collective defense arising from collective security arrangement. Article 5 of NATO treaty of 1949 stated that the parties agreed that an armed attack against one or more of the member states in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all".

Kupchan and Kupchan (1995) gave the advantages of collective security to fall under two categories. It provides for more effective balancing against aggressions, and it also promotes trust and cooperation. Collective security provides for more effective balancing against aggressors because it confronts aggressors with preponderant force as opposed to merely equal force. The preponderance is as a result of the coalition entered by states who have made either explicit or implicit commitments to oppose any threat to the community, do so because, they have interests in protecting an international order that they see as beneficial to their individual security. Collective security is advantageous not only because it provides better balancing against aggressors, but also because it fosters an environment in which aggression is less likely to take place or to succeed against the collective will of the majority (deterrence).

Collective security ameliorates the security dilemma, thereby enhancing stability and reducing the likelihood of unintended spirals of hostility, this is done by building confidence among member states about each other's' intentions, collective security thus mitigates the constraints imposed on cooperation by relative-gains consideration. *Boko haram* as a terrorist organization emanated in Nigeria but its activities spread to Niger, Cameroon and Chad (LCB Region), thereby posing a great security threat to the entire region. To effectively curb the menace of the sect, a collective action is needed. Therefore, this research on Multinational Joint Task force and the Struggle against *Boko Haram* can be best analyzed using the collective security Theory.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this qualitative research is the Phenomenology Research Design. Phenomenology is a way of describing something that exists as an integral part of the world in which we are living and we are surrounded by many phenomena (Astalin, 2013). A qualitative approach is one in which the

researcher often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e. the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e. political, issue-oriented, collaborative or change-oriented) or both.(Creswell, 1998, p. 2003), Qualitative research emphasizes natural settings, understanding, verbal narratives, and flexible designs. It is also known as constructivist, naturalistic, interpretive, post-positivist or postmodern perspective as advanced by Kant, Miles and Huberman.

Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them. It is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups or human problem. The process involves emerging questions and procedures; data are typically collected in the participant's setting, analyzed inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher interpreting the meaning of the data.

The method of data collection is essentially composed of direct non participant observation, data from research, reports and articles published in books, journals, Newspapers, magazines and internet and documents including Global Terrorist data base, Global terrorist index reports and Mercy corps. These sources provide credible reports and data on terrorist activities all over the world and in the Lake Chad Basin Area, to be specific.

To analyze the data collected, content analysis was used and it is mostly used to analyze documented information in the form of texts, media, or even physical items. When to use this method depends largely on the research questions. Content analysis makes use of existing or already collected data to be carefully analyzed or reanalyzed. Critical issues and concerns to the study were thoroughly examined in relation to the research questions and objectives. The issues raised in the course of the research were analyzed from the data collected.

Results and Discussions

Results

The African continent and West Africa sub region in particular, has experienced and is still experiencing insecurity challenges arising from political instability, ethno-religious conflicts and most recently, terrorism. Conflict that emanates from one country would quickly spread and engulf the other parts of the region. Many

factors led to the conflicts in these countries where for instance, their borders are so porous, the movement of goods and people flow unchecked and without any major restrictions.

There is also the trans-border cultural relation where for instance Hausa and Fulbe are widely spoken in Northern Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali and Ghana, and Kanuri is also spoken in Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon just as Yoruba language is spoken in Nigeria, Benin and Togo (Adetula, 2014, and Suleiman, 2015). Also, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea located within the Manor River and share common socio-economic realities. This is not surprising as conflicts in Nigeria and Chad have implications for the Lake Chad Basin and by extension, regional implications for ECOWAS.

Discussions

Boko Haram as a Threat to Security of Lake Chad basin

Boko Haram began as a sect in Yobe state, northeastern Nigeria, in 2002 under the leadership of a preacher, Mohammed Yusuf and then it spread to other parts of the Lake Chad Basin. At the beginning, the sect leadership's discourse of religious revival and a return to what they believed to be the true tenets of Islam were portrayed as the remedy to corruption, bad governance, poverty and other societal ills all too obvious in Northern Nigerian. Following the death of Yusuf in a disputatious circumstance, there was sudden increase in the scale and brutality of *Boko Haram* violence under the leadership of his deputy, Abubakar Shekau. The sect began targeting those they considered complicit in Yusuf's killing, including the Nigerian military and police, as well as others they associated with the Nigerian state. The UN became a target in 2011 due to its strategic development support to the government of Nigeria. (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2014/05/06/explaining-the-emergence-of-boko-haram>). There was widespread use of female and child suicide bombers and mass abductions notably the kidnapping of the Chibok girls from a school in Borno state (2014), and also in Dapchi (2019) among others, further brought the sect to international media attention.

According to Campbell (2019) Boko Haram has been wreaking havoc in the Lake Chad Basin for nearly a decade. The group's violence has led to the deaths of over 50,000 people, displaced over 2.5 million and triggered a large-scale humanitarian crisis across the region. In its campaign to capture and control territory in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, violence escalated further in 2015 and then the border

towns of Bosso in Niger and Ngouboua village in Chad came under attack, signifying the spread of violence beyond Nigeria's borders, and making it clear that Niger, Chad and Cameroon had become part of *Boko Haram's* fighting ground. Then in the spring of 2015, *Boko Haram* pledged its allegiance to Islamic State and changed its name to Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) (Ladbury et al 2015). Nationals from Niger, Chad and Cameroon travelled to northern Nigeria, attracted by Yusuf's charismatic sermons and by the small loans offered to his followers. This provided the foundation for a multinational sect, dominated by the Kanuri ethnic group, stretching across the Lake Chad sub-region.

The activities of *Boko Haram* in the Lake Chad basin have made the group to be listed among terrorist groups on the account of several violent attacks by the group which has largely affected both social and economic activities in the Northeast region of Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin in general. Many residents have fled their homes while a lot more others could hardly go about their normal legitimate businesses with many residents fleeing their homes and abandoning their business thus leading to serious reduction in economic activities. As Okereocha (2012) asserted human capital and investors drain is hampering economic development in Northeast region due to attacks on markets, banks and parks. *Boko Haram* activities have affected the economy of the Lake Chad Basin by destruction of properties, driving out direct foreign investments. Internally displaced persons are no longer able to engage in agricultural activities for some years in addition to destruction of the educational structures, etc. in the conflict affected region. It was reported that (Punch, 2012, p. 13) investors are wary of coming to a place where their lives and investments are not safe, as a result of this, Nigeria has been on a steady decline in the global peace index.

The activities of *Boko Haram* have affected agricultural sector. This claim is backed by Vanguard (2014) when it reported that if the activities of Boko haram are not curtailed it would be a matter of time for the entire region to be engulfed in looming famine on the heels of their activities. The activities of terrorist group in the northeast region have also affected the cultural sector. For instance, Sambisa Game Reserve, Gwoza hills and the Sukur cultural landscape among other tourism sites have been looted and destroyed by the terrorist group (Adam et al, 2018).

Boko Haram has been an obstacle to development of education in the northeast. The attack on schools has made students afraid of going to schools and parents

also afraid to send their children to school. The violent attack of the group on schools has caused the death of teachers, students as well as the destruction of many school buildings in the northeast. This has further worsened the literacy level in a region already battling with poor literacy rates and high out of school children records. *Boko Haram* is one of the greatest challenges of our times assuming human rights dimension. It has also posed a serious threat to economic prosperity, peace, human security and sub-regional security in the Lake Chad.

Measures adopted by MNJTF in tackling the threat to security posed by Boko Haram

According to Olawale (2017), the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was created by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in 1998 to address cross-border security issues in the Lake Chad region and had been inactive until it was reactivated by the LCBC in 2012 with an expanded mandate to encompass counter-terrorism operations. It is a combined multinational formation, comprising units, mostly military, from Benin Republic, Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. It is headquartered in N'Djamena and is mandated to bring an end to the *Boko Haram* insurgency. It was given a clearer strategy against *Boko Haram* at the Extraordinary Summit of LCBC member states and Benin in October 2014. Distinctively, unlike in the past, the task force included Cameroon among its troop-contributing countries, and was provided with pledges of financial support from international actors including the African Union (AU), the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union (EU) and France (Comolli, 2017). International partners also offered military advisors, intelligence and surveillance capabilities and training.

According to the African Union report (2015), MNJTF was mandated within its area of Operation as will be determined in the concept of operation, to:

- i. Create a safe and secure environment in the areas affected by the activities of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, in order to significantly reduce violence against civilians and other abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, in full compliance with International Law, including International Humanitarian Law and the UN HRDDP;
- ii. Facilitate the implementation of overall stabilization programmes by the LCBC Member States and Benin in the affected areas, including the full restoration of state authority and the return of IDPs and refugees; and

- iii. Facilitate, within the limit of its capabilities, humanitarian operations and the delivery of assistance to the affected populations.

Within the framework of the mandate as cited in the African Union report (2015) within its area of operation the MNJTF contingents should be deployed within their national territories and may carry out a number of tasks. These will include the following:

- i. Conducting military operations to prevent the expansion of *Boko Haram* and other terrorist groups activities and eliminate their presence;
- ii. Facilitating operational coordination amongst the affected countries in the fight against *Boko Haram* and other terrorist groups, including on the basis of the intelligence collected by the LCBC member states and Benin and/or availed by external partners;
- iii. Encouraging and facilitating the conduct of joint/simultaneous/coordinated patrols and other types of operations at the borders of the affected countries;
- iv. Preventing all forms of transfer of arms and ammunition and other type of support to *Boko Haram* and other terrorist groups;
- v. Ensuring, within its capabilities, the protection of civilians under immediate threat, IDP and refugee camps, humanitarian workers and other civilian personnel;
- vi. Actively searching for, and freeing all abductees, including the young girls abducted in Chibok in April 2014 and also most recently the abduction of the girls in Dapchi;
- vii. Undertaking effective psychological operations to encourage defections from *Boko Haram* and other terrorist groups;
- viii. Supporting, as maybe appropriate, the initial implementation phase of strategies for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of disengaged fighters into their communities
- ix. Contributing to the improvement and institutionalization of Civil-Military coordination, including the provision, upon request, of escorts to humanitarian convoys;
- x. Supporting regional efforts to arrest and bring to justice all those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

- xi. Ensuring the protection of the MNJTF personnel, facilities and equipment.

Challenges Confronting MNJTF in Ending the Scourge of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin

In the view of Wendyam (2017), financial challenges are the major issues confronting MNJTF in ending the scourge of Boko Haram. Financial constraints have hindered the operationalization of the MNJTF. Before it was able to occupy its current premises, the LCBC Secretariat in N'Djamena hosted its command. Similar difficulties were encountered in setting up the various MNJTF sectors of operations in the field. This weighed even more heavily on the troop-contributing countries because they were already burdened by the considerable financial costs of the human and material resources pitted against *Boko Haram*.

These difficulties continue to act as a constraint. Assanvo (2016) states clearly that the MNJTF commander is determined to carry out his initial budget requirements of the MNJTF, estimated at nearly US \$700 million. The financial support the MNJTF is meant to receive is not directed at the procurement of weaponry or military equipment, but is instead meant to meet its logistical and material needs and cover a part of its human resources costs. This mainly covers land and air transport requirements; secured communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; equipment for the command headquarters and the camps in the sectors. This is what the 50 million euros promised by the European Union is destined for. Freeing up this contribution has taken a long time due to administrative reasons.

There are numerous challenges encountered by MNJTF in its resolve to fight *Boko Haram* in West Africa. Abdulbasit and Nwankpa, (2018) noted that the MNJTF has also had some significant setbacks. The first occurred between January 3 and 7, 2015, in what became known as the “Baga Massacre,” which included the death of 2,000 civilians at the hands of *Boko Haram*. The massacre was due to a number of causes, including poor planning and a lack of coordination between the regional states.

Tactically and operationally, there is very little the MNJTF can do, since it is only as strong as its members. It lacks both intelligence architecture and operational standby force it could willingly deploy in counter-terrorism operations. Hence the bureaucratic bottle neck involved in mobilizing fighting force whenever the need

arises slowed down the progress of the Joint Task Force and its efficiency in the face of *Boko Haram* attacks.

Assanvo, (2016), observed that in addition to the large loss of civilian life, the MNJTF command post of the time, located in the town of Baga, Nigeria on the shores of Lake Chad, was completely wiped out by *Boko Haram*. This disastrous event left the MNJTF in disarray and confused. The lack or insufficient resources needed for MNJTF to effectively carry out the mission of fighting *Boko Haram* may also impede the LCBC from doing what is expected of it. The lack of fund is as a result of LCBC reliance and dependence on its member states and donors, and especially now that Nigeria which has been bearing the largest cost of various ECOWAS missions now has its resources overstretched with the activities of the *Boko Haram*.

Nigeria's neighbours like Cameroon and Chad who are also affected by the terrorist activities do belong to LCBC but do not belong to ECOWAS the regional organization, which means that there is the need for trans-national response rather than only LCBC.

vi. Measures Needed in Fighting Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin

In response to the increasingly regional threat posed by Boko Haram, the government of Nigeria should increase its cooperation with its neighbours Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The four countries should revisit the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) - originally formed in 1998 to address security concerns in the Lake Chad area—to combat the group's spread beyond the Lake Chad Basin borders. The MNJTF Blog (2018) asserted that in the beginning of 2015, the MNJTF was deployed in four sectors:

Sector 1: With the command post located in Mora in Cameroon, this sector covers a large part of the area of the 4th Joint Military Region of Cameroon, including the departments of Logone et Chari, Mayo Sava and Mayo Tsanaga.

Sector 2: With the command post located in the town of Baga-sola, in Chad, this sector covers a large part of the area of the 4th Military Region of Chad.

Sector 3: With the command post located in Baga, Nigeria, this sector covers a part of the area of the 7th Division in northeastern Nigeria, which includes Gubio, Mobbar, Abadam, Guzamala, Kukawa, Monguno, Marte, Baga, Ngala, Kalabalge, and Dikwa. This area remains the

epicenter of Boko Haram insurgency fueled by religious extremism (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/28/boko-haram-launches-series-of-attacks-in-north-east-nigeria>).

Sector 4: With the command post located in Diffa, Niger, this sector covers a large part of the area of the 5th Military Region of Niger, including Maine-Soroa, Diffa, Bosso, and Nguigmi.

Conclusion

The Multinational Joint Task Force was envisioned at its inception as a collective security institution, but was not ready for this kind of peace keeping approach to a guerrilla insurgency. *Boko Haram* insurgency has done a lot of damage to the Lake Chad region and the entire West Africa as a whole. The implication is that *Boko haram* is not only a challenge of Nigeria, but the entire region. This is because of the porous borders in the region, the shared and similar socio-cultural, economic and political realities of West African states which means that *Boko haram* activities could spread across the region and could be felt not only by Nigeria but the entire region. The acts of terrorism cannot completely be defeated by one state but requires collective effort from the global community. The Nigerian government has been announcing its success against the group but the killing continues every day. ECOWAS is already having in place many useful mechanisms that could be used in fighting terrorism in the region. It only needs to make adequate use of them to help Nigeria and the countries of the Lake Chad region to end the scourge of *Boko haram* in the region. *Boko haram* is a serious threat to the Lake Chad region and regional security in the entire West African region.

Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing, this paper makes the following recommendations;

1. Since terrorism may not be fought by military might alone, even though various efforts are being made in that direction by the Nigerian government and the Multinational Joint Task Force, the MNJTF should seek alternative and nonmilitary options in dealing with the insurgents. The release of 21 Chibok Girls by the terrorists following negotiation brokered by the Red Cross and Swiss government officials indicates that negotiation is a very important tool in ending the scourge of *Boko haram* terrorism in the region.
2. The MNJTF member states need to be more alive to their obligations including adequate funding to guarantee a boost in military capacity,

- capabilities and intelligence gathering and the use of modern technology to effectively fight *Boko Haram* and other forms of terrorism in the region.
3. Member states of the Lake Chad Region must do more to address the underlining social problem of injustice, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and bad governance among them that make it easy for the recruitment of youths into terrorism.
 4. ECOWAS mechanisms for fighting terrorism should be implemented by member states. These include the ECOWAS Conflict prevention Framework (ECPF) as well as the very important ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy and Implementation plan adopted in 2013.
 5. Governments in Nigeria and across the Lake Chad must collaborate with clerics to help counter the extreme ideology of the *Boko Haram* through preaching and proper education and enlightenment of their citizens to encourage tolerance and accommodation among citizens.
 6. Each member state of the LCBC should task a specific government agency with the responsibility of preparing communities and local settlements to receive de radicalized and repentant fighters. This would require rebuilding communities and their livelihoods, and establishing a framework for truth-telling, forgiveness and reconciliation.
 7. Lastly member states must outgrow the colonial legacy of mutual distrust and suspicion which obviously impede the mutual cooperation and collaboration required to deal with the menace of *Boko Haram* and common threats to security of the region.

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